

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00365 141854Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
EUR-12 IO-13 CU-04 /092 W
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R 141414Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4146
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0365

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR PEPR MPOL ECON XL CU NS
SUBJ: CUBAN OUTREACH IN THE CARIBBEAN

REF: STATE 56727

1. EMBASSY HAS NOT BEEN AWARE OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL
STEP-UP IN CUBAN EFFORTS TO EXTEND THEIR INFLUENCE IN
SURINAM. SUCH EFFORTS AS WE HAVE WITNESSED IN THE PAST,
SUCH AS ATTEMPTS SOON AFTER SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE TO
ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, HAVE BEEN COLD-SHOULDERED
BY THE CAUTIOUS SURINAMERS AND MAY HAVE INDUCED CUBA TO
SHIFT GEARS AND TAKE A LOWER PROFILE.

2. THERE IS A TINY AMOUNT OF TRADE BETWEEN SURINAM AND
CUBA, WITH CUBA SELLING A COUPLE OF THOUSAND TONS OF
REFINED SUGAR TO SURINAM A YEAR AND WITH SURINAM
OCCASIONALLY EXPORTING WOOD PRODUCTS TO CUBA. A CUBAN
TRAINING SHIP, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS RECENTLY IN PARAMARIBO
HARBOR TO DELIVER 1200 TONS OF SUGAR. THERE IS LITTLE
LIKELIHOOD THAT THIS TRADE WILL GROW SIGNIFICANTLY ANY
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PAGE 02 PARAMA 00365 141854Z

TIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE, BUT IN CONNECTION WITH IT THERE
HAVE BEEN VISITS OF CUBAN TRADE OFFICIALS TO PARAMARIBO
IN THE PAST AND SOME SURINAM BUSINESSMEN HAVE VISITED HAVANA.
HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN NEARLY A YEAR SINCE ANY CUBAN OFFICIAL
HAS BEEN KNOWN TO CALL IN SURINAM.

3. PRENSA LATINA DOES HAVE AN INPUT INTO SURINAM'S

PRESS, BUT ITS PLACEMENT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE AS EXTENSIVE AS IT HAD BEEN SAY A YEAR OR TWO AGO. PERHAPS THIS IS MORE A RESULT OF SURINAM IMPROVING ITS ACCESS TO ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF INFORMATION, BUT AT ANY RATE, THERE IS NOT DISCERNIBLE INCREASE IN CUBAN PRESS OR PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES.

4. CUBA DOES HAVE A SMALL NUCLEUS OF SUPPORTERS IN SURINAM, THE MOST PROMINENT OF WHICH PERHAPS ARE FORMER PNR (NATIONALISTIC REPUBLIC PARTY) MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ROBIN RAVELES AND TO A LESS-NOTICEABLE EXTENT PNR CHAIRMAN BRUMA. RAVELES RECENTLY VISITED CUBA TO DISCUSS PLANE FOR THE 1978 WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN HAVANA AND PRESUMABLY WILL BE AIMING TO PUT TOGETHER A SURINAM DELEGATION TO ATTEND THE FESTIVAL. THERE IS ALSO A SURINAM-CUBA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, BUT LITTLE HAS BEEN HEARD FROM IT IN THE PAST TWO YEARS.

5. ONE OTHER AREA IN WHICH CUBA HAS DEVELOPED A RELATIONSHIP WITH SURINAM IS SPORTS. IN 1977, SURINAMERS WERE TREATED TO A CUBAN VOLLEYBALL TEAM, WHICH GAVE A TERRIBLE DRUBBING TO THE POORLY-MATCHED SURINAM TEAMS THEY PLAYED, AND THERE HAS BEEN TALK OF A CUBAN TABLE TENNIS TEAM COMING HERE THIS YEAR.

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PAGE 03 PARAMA 00365 141854Z

6. SURINAM IS NOT LIKELY TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WILL SPECIFICALLY OFFEND CUBA, BUT IT IS ALSO WARY OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CUBANS BECAUSE OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHETHER IT COULD HANDLE THEM IN THE OPEN SURINAM SOCIETY WITH THE ILL-PREPARED INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES THE GOS PRESENTLY HAS AND BECAUSE OF A GENUINE FEAR THAT CUBAN IDEOLOGY COULD SEEP INTO SURINAM POLITICS AND UPSET SURINAM'S SENSITIVE BALANCE OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY. THUS, ALTHOUGH WE MAY ONE DAY SEE SOME SORT OF CUBAN REPRESENTATION IN SURINAM, WE WOULD NOT ANTICIPATE ANY DRASTIC OR RAPID RISE IN CUBAN INFLUENCE IN THIS COUNTRY OVER THE NEAR OR MEDIUM-TERM ZURHELLEN

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